

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF RADIOLOGISTS

EXAMINATION FOR THE FELLOWSHIP IN CLINICAL RADIOLOGY

REVISIONS TO THE FRCR EXAMINATIONS

Following discussion over a number of years, the Faculty of Clinical Radiology of the Royal College of Radiologists has agreed revisions that it wishes to make to the First and Final FRCR Examinations. It must be noted that the plans given below remain subject to consideration by the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB). The PMETB's formal approval is required before the changes can be effected. It is appreciated that the lack of a firm announcement about these changes may feel unsettling; however, the Royal College of Radiologists feels that it is important for training scheme personnel, trainees, prospective trainees and candidates to have as much notification and information as is available at this stage about what is planned so that they can most effectively prepare for the FRCR Examinations.

It is intended to make and implement the changes over a period of time rather than all at once. Therefore, some of the revisions are more developed than others at this stage, which means that the amount of information that can be provided varies. Further information, detail and documentation will be published (on the College's website) as it is agreed.

The five main areas for change, and their planned dates of implementation, are summarised below.

1	single test of physics knowledge	Spring 2009
2	electronic format for rapid reporting session	Spring 2009
3	single best answer (SBA) format questions for the Final FRCR Part A Examination	Autumn 2009
4	test of anatomy knowledge	Spring 2010
5	electronic format for reporting session	not before Spring 2010

The first proposals submitted to the PMETB concern items (1) and (2) above, ie the manner in which the physics components of the syllabus are examined and the medium used for conduct of the rapid reporting session of the Final FRCR Part B Examination. It is hoped that the PMETB's decisions about these proposals will be available in July 2008 and they will be announced by the College as soon as possible after their receipt. The current plans for these changes are given in sections (1) and (2) below. Outline plans for the three other proposed changes are given in sections (3), (4) and (5) later in this document.

CHANGES PLANNED FOR THE SPRING 2009 SITTING

(1) Single Test of Physics Knowledge

- With effect from the *Spring 2009* sitting, it is proposed that the entire physics component of the syllabus will be covered by the First FRCR Examination rather than being divided between the First FRCR Examination and the Final FRCR Part A Examination as at present. This change will affect those starting specialty training in 2008.

- The component parts of the syllabus are being combined and rationalised and the integrated syllabus will be published as soon as possible after the PMETB notifies the College that it has approved this approach, which it is hoped will occur in July 2008.
- The examination will comprise a single paper of multiple choice questions (MCQs), which will be in the current multiple true/false format. It is proposed that the paper will comprise 40 questions and that candidates will be given two hours to complete the paper.
- Negative marking will be discontinued. There will be no fixed pass mark or pass rate. The required standard for success will be determined at each sitting of the examination based on the difficulty of the questions selected and so may vary between sittings.
- The new format First FRCR Examination will be held three times a year – in March, June and September.
- The current format First FRCR Examination will be held at the Summer 2008, Winter 2008 and Spring 2009 sittings only, after which it will be discontinued. Entry to the Winter 2008 and Spring 2009 sittings of the current format examination will be restricted to candidates who are resitting the examination. Questions addressing physics will no longer be included in the Final FRCR Part A Examination after the Spring 2009 sitting.
- There will be no limit on the number of attempts that candidates may make at the new format examination. However, candidates who have reached the attempts limit for the First FRCR Examination in its current or any of its previous formats will not be permitted to enter the new format examination.
- Sample questions are being developed and will be published as soon as they are agreed, along with revised candidate guidance notes and instructions.

(2) **Electronic Format for Rapid Reporting Session**

- With effect from the Spring 2009 sitting of the Final FRCR Part B Examination, it is proposed that the material for the rapid reporting session will be presented electronically rather than on hard copy film as at present.
- Candidates will sit the rapid reporting session at a separate time and venue to the reporting session.
- Candidates will record their answers on a paper answer sheet as currently.
- The cases will be presented on PCs as fixed jpeg images (not DICOM), with no image manipulation facility.
- The number of cases and/or duration may be altered from the current 30 cases in 30 minutes.
- A sample electronic rapid reporting session will be provided to aid candidate preparation as soon as is practicable, along with revised candidate guidance notes and instructions.

OTHER PROPOSED CHANGES

Submissions to the PMETB for the other proposed changes will be made at a later stage as the plans for these are less well advanced. Outlines of the planned alterations are given below but are subject to further consideration (and, therefore, possibly modification) prior to their formal submission to the PMETB. Updated information will be published as soon as is practicable.

(3) Single Best Answer (SBA) Questions for the Final FRCR Part A Examination

- It is currently planned to introduce single best answer (SBA) questions for the Final FRCR Part A Examination at the Autumn 2009 sitting.
- There will continue to be six modules as at present.
- Negative marking will be discontinued. There will be no fixed pass mark or pass rate. The required standard for success will be determined at each sitting of the examination based on the difficulty of the questions selected and so may vary between sittings.
- Candidates who have passed any modules of the Final FRCR Part A Examination in its current format will not need to resit these when the new format question is introduced.
- Further information, such as the number of questions, duration of each paper, sample questions, candidate guidance notes and instructions etc, will be published as soon as is practicable.

(4) Test of Anatomy Knowledge

- At a later stage, currently planned to be with effect from the Spring 2010 sitting, the First FRCR Examination will be divided into two modules: anatomy and physics. The format of the physics module will be as laid out above.
- The test of anatomy knowledge will be conducted electronically.
- Candidates will be asked to identify labelled features on images.
- The anatomy module will be held three times a year – probably in March, June and September.
- There will be no fixed pass mark or pass rate. The required standard for success will be determined at each sitting of the examination based on the difficulty of the questions selected and so may vary between sittings.
- Further information, such as the number of questions, duration of the examination, sample examination, candidate guidance notes and instructions etc, will be published as soon as is practicable.

(5) Electronic Format for the Reporting Session

- At a later stage, currently planned to be no earlier than the Spring 2010 sitting, the material for the reporting session component of the Final FRCR Part B Examination will be presented electronically rather than on hard copy film as at present.

- The number of cases and/or duration may be altered from the current six cases in 45 minutes.
- Further information, such as the format of images, number of cases, duration of the electronic reporting session, method of recording answers, candidate guidance notes and instructions etc, will be published as soon as is practicable.

SUMMARY of PROVISIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TIMESCALE

SITTING	FIRST FRCR EXAMINATION	FINAL FRCR EXAMINATION
Summer 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • last sitting at which new candidates may enter current format 	--
Winter 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • penultimate sitting of current format; open to resit candidates only 	--
Spring 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • last sitting of current format; open to resit candidates only • first sitting of combined <i>physics</i> examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • last sitting of <i>Part A</i> using current format questions and including physics • first sitting of <i>Part B</i> using electronic <i>rapid reporting session</i>
Autumn 2009	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first sitting of <i>Part A</i> using SBA questions
Spring 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first sitting of <i>anatomy</i> module 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>possible</i> adoption of electronic format for the <i>Part B reporting session</i>

May 2008